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DISCUSSION ON THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

CHAPTER 3. THE CULTIVATION OF A PARTY MEMBER

Liu Shao ch'i

A. Introduction

1. Necessity for Training and Discipline

Existence has always been a struggle with nature for the necessities of life. In the course of the struggle for human progress, changes have taken place and are still taking place. Present conditions demand radical improvements, even a revolution. This calls for sagacious and able leaders. To qualify for effective leadership in the great revolution which is now in progress, every Party member should pursue a rigorous course of mental and spiritual discipline.

2. Members Should Study Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin

Members should not be satisfied with meeting the minimum requirements for Party membership, but should strive to go higher and deeper in securing a clear understanding and firm grasp of Party ideology. For this it is necessary at least to acquire familiarity with the lives, characters, work, and writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

3. Aspects and Methods of Self-Discipline

Discipline should include, in addition to the above, cultivation of the ability to apply the theory of Marxism-Leninism in the practical affairs of daily life, and of all that pertains to personal morality, Party discipline, fellowship with other Party members, difficulties, hardships, strategy and methods of the Party struggle, and problems of dealing with all types of people and situations. It has been found desirable to keep a diary to enable

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one to profit by self-criticism; members must recognize their own mistakes and mistakes, and welcome the criticisms of others. Chinese literature is full of suggestions for moral discipline, but many of them seem too much of isolation and asceticism to be usable. Subjective cultivation of virtue in solitude by prayer and meditation is vain and absurd in the extreme. We are materialists and in our self-discipline we must be practical and realistic. We must keep close to the masses, strengthen and clarify our proletarian and Communist ideas, and cleanse our minds of all conflicting ideologies. We must firmly rid ourselves of the old evil of divorcing theory from practice; whatever we preach we must practice.

#### 4. Relation Between Study of Marxist-Leninist Theory and Cultivation of a Correct Ideological Consciousness

Some members think that a person's previous class background and ideas have no relation to his understanding of the theories and methods of Marxism-Leninism. They think a true grasp of the latter can be gained through purely intellectual study, regardless of the retention of former nonproletarian ideas and attitudes. This is wrong. Without the true proletarian spirit and the correct ideological consciousness, a person cannot grasp the real meaning of Marxist-Leninist theories and methods, and without the latter, self-discipline will be without a guide and therefore impossible.

#### B. Cultivation of Ideological Consciousness

I consider that, basically, this cultivation refers to three mental conflicts: (1) between the proletarian ideology and other ideologies, (2) between the Communist philosophy of life and other philosophies of life, and (3) between the Party's revolutionary interests and objectives and the Party member's personal interests and aims. Here we have conflicts between incompatible and antagonistic concepts; in each instance, the resolution of the conflict for a Party member should be, through the process of mental cultivation and self-discipline, the triumph of the former ideology, philosophy, and interest, and the rout of the latter. The alternative would be fearfully dangerous to the member and to the Party.

1. It should be understood that what Communism undertakes is the greatest and most difficult enterprise in the history of mankind. The basic responsibility of a Party member is to realize Communism, to convert the world into a Communist world. A Communist world is the best and happiest kind of world, devoid of exploitation, oppression, capitalism, fascism, imperialism, strife, war, and injustice.

Is it possible to realize a Communist society? The answer is yes. Marxism-Leninism, in substance, makes it unmistakably clear that the realization of a Communist world is the inevitable outcome of mankind's class struggle. The victory of socialism in the USSR actually proves this hypothesis. The responsibility of CCP members is to hasten the realization of this Communist society, which sooner or later is certain to be realized.

2. The individual Party member's personal interests must be unconditionally subservient to the interests of the Party.

3. Examples of persons possessing erroneous ideological consciousness within the Party are those who have but a partial or mistaken understanding of what Communism is, or who join the Party with mixed motives, who carry over with them the ideology of the class in which they grew, who put personal advantage ahead of advantage to the community, who seek a high and prominent or influential position, or who have a contentious temperament.

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4. Admittedly, there are imperfections in the Party, in its organization, members and in its decisions and actions, despite persistent attacks against them. The CCP is not a perfect thing descended from heaven, but something constructed in an unjust and hostile environment. The disciplining of the Party from mistaken and evil elements is a constantly necessary process which is to be accomplished, in large part, by the very methods of self-discipline which are now under discussion.

5. As Engels has said, the eradication of error and misbehavior, and the reconciliations of divergent ideas and settlement of disputes as to policies, can only be accomplished by conflict. Various attitudes toward these objectionable features are held by different members: (1) some welcome their presence and seek to increase them, (2) some sympathize with them and do nothing about them, (3) some do not approve, but dislike contention and hence ignore them, (4) some hate them and wish to summarily expel them.

The proper way is to contend strenuously for the right principles, but to try to avoid antagonizing their opponents. Unity and harmony must be preserved.

6. Ideology must be projected into political affairs. Political struggle represents the highest level of class struggle. In political struggle ideas must be converted from abstract principles into concrete practice.

#### C. Relation of Self-Discipline to Organization and Party Discipline

##### 1. Party Member's Relations With the Party and With Other Members

a. The Party is a compound, not a mixture, of diverse elements, resulting in a new substance or creation.

b. The Party is composed of individuals in organized relationships, such as that of the leaders to the led.

c. The Party is not a union of separate organized bodies, or a federation of local Party organizations, but a body of diverse constituent elements organized into a centralized entity.

d. The Party embodies a system of centralized democracy, or democratic centralization. While this may seem paradoxical, nevertheless the Chinese Communist Party does consist of just such a compound of antithetical principles, where the populace chooses its leadership in which authority is centralized and to whom the populace then yields subservience.

e. Members are to be attentive to examination of self and of others, to criticism of self and of others, so as to ensure that all adhere to the Party line.

##### 2. Implementation of System of Democratic Centralization

a. The term collective leadership and democratic centralization means that leadership is not an individual matter; on the contrary, the leaders are bound by policies that have been derived by democratic methods. However, in the formulation of policies, each member is a leader or a follower, depending upon his qualifications.

b. Misconceptions arise concerning the implementation of democratic centralization. One such misconception is that the principles of democratic centralization are relative and optional rather than absolute and peremptory.

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The "line" must be followed whether the member thinks it is right or wrong. It is necessary to ensure uniformity. Of course, sometimes the majority is wrong and the minority is right. In that case the decision of the majority must be obeyed. Minority members, however, have the right and the duty to endeavor to try to bring the majority to their way of thinking.

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c. High ranking and responsible Party Leaders are bound by the rule stated in the preceding paragraph. Even Lenin obeyed this rule.

D. Willingness and Compulsion

Some necessary work may be unpleasant, difficult or dangerous, but since the Party member has voluntarily chosen to enlist in the cause, he must willingly do what the interests of the cause make necessary. At the same time, the wise leader will endeavor, as far as possible, to fit the qualifications and inclinations of the worker to the task, and thus insure good spirits and greater effectiveness.

E. Liberty and Necessity

Prospective members frequently object to Party discipline and wish to retain liberty of action. Engels has said, "Liberty is the true recognition of necessity." [The writer expounds at considerable length the concept of "Liberty under law."]

F. Party Policy on Cadresmen, and Cadresmen's Attitude Toward the Party

This policy has been expounded elsewhere; members should guard against a proud attitude which expresses itself in attempts to reverse the direction of its operation.

G. Relationship Between Peasant and Educated Cadresmen, and Between Old and New Cadresmen

The problem arises due to heterogeneity, and is revealed by friction, lack of mutual understanding and appreciation, and differing viewpoints. It is the aim of the Party to raise the peasant cadresman to a higher educational level and convert the educated cadresman to the rural point of view. Through association both may profit, and the work of the cadre as a whole may be strengthened and improved.

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